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REPORT OF INSPECTION OF NURSE TRAINING SCHOOLS, FOR THE YEAR ENDING JULY 31, 1908 *

By ANNA L. ALLINE, R.N.
New York State Inspector of Training Schools for Nurses

I HAVE the pleasure of again reporting a year of progress in our work.

Improvements have been made all over the state, a little here, and a great deal there, in repairs, alterations and new buildings, both in hospitals and homes. There has been marked improvement in practical and theoretical instruction through closer supervision of practical work, and lecture work being replaced by recitation and demonstration.

The last examination shows that instruction has been more systematic and thorough than heretofore. More hospitals have been able to provide diet kitchen experience; this, with better instruction than has been possible before, has brought the standing of dietetics up one step in the examinations. The lowest on the list now is the care of children.

As to departments for experience there is no lack for surgery; in some schools medical cases are quite limited in number. All schools meet the minimum requirement of six obstetrical cases, but the weakest department of all is the care of children.

Little can be learned of the nature of children and how to soothe and quiet them when the few cases admitted are cared for in the adult wards.

Affiliated relations with hospitals for children seem to offer the best solution of this problem and this plan is being developed more and more, but must be pushed this coming year, as more than one-fourth of the candidates examined failed in this subject.

The educational requirement of one year in the high school which was such a bugbear a year ago has ceased to be alarming. In truth where the demand is strongly made, where the requirement is strictly enforced, it is being met in a most satisfactory manner. Several schools have raised it to a two-year high school course. If the candidate has not had the year in the high school, night schools, private schools and business courses are the usual substitutes offered.

* Read at the meeting of the New York State Nurses' Association, Buffalo, October, 1908.

The certificates are being asked for and furnished. This method of obtaining definite information is advisable, and to judge from the experiences of some of our schools it is the easiest and surest way. Students from the public schools go to the hospitals and inquire how long they must attend school to be eligible for the course of training. Others have taken up their studies again to enable them to have a certificate to offer.

A year or two more and such a thing as failing in three, four or five subjects in one examination will not be heard of, but instead the Department will be called upon to furnish more honor seals. In January but one received honors, and in June there were twelve. A purple seal on the certificate is the emblem of honor, and is awarded to all who pass 90 per cent. in seven subjects of the examination. The number of applications have increased to such an extent as to enable schools to fill their classes with acceptable women, and some even have a waiting list. A year ago the lack of applicants was attributed to registration and examination, and is it not just to say that a more plentiful supply is because of registration? I surely believe it is so, as the real reason for the shortage was poor conditions in care and instruction. These conditions have improved because of registration, and we see as the result an increase in the number of applicants.

The length of the course in the training is not discussed as much to-day as it was a year ago. The schools that shortened their course talked of it some time before it was really put into effect. January, 1910, is the date on which the first class admitted to these schools on the two-year schedule will complete the course. It will be some time before the results of this experiment will be known. The state association has much to be proud of; it has done a great work in a few years' time, in fact, more than was thought possible. It may be that we have rushed ahead too rapidly to see all the pitfalls.

I am fully convinced from what I see from day to day that we should, long ere this, have been more specific as to our requirements. We have never put ourselves on record as to what the majority believe the training-school course should be. True, our law names the general departments for experience, and states that the course must be not less than two full years, and not less than twenty-five beds in the hospital. We also have the syllabus, with which you are all familiar, but that is for the minimum course of two years, leaving it to the "superintendent to develop the course as she thinks best," and making no suggestion to our seventy registered schools now carrying on the full three-year course. A "lady manager" said to me only last week: "Well, we have changed

our course to two years.” “Is that so, why did you make the change?” She said: “The regents want the two-year course, that is what they outlined.” I think I convinced her in ten minutes that that is not what the regents want, and it was no credit to the institution to keep to the minimum standards. It may seem like sheer stupidity for a board to take such action without stronger grounds, but do we not have to guard against just such errors? The reason why many more mistakes of this sort have not happened is because of the many excellent women in charge of the schools. We want more of these excellent women, women who will not pervert the true meaning of the law or be satisfied with minimum requirements of it if it is possible to do better; women who will always stand for thorough all around training. The important thing at this moment is for us to be more explicit as to what should be taught both in theoretical and practical work. We want one target for all schools to aim at. Not every shot will pierce the bull’s eye, but with practice they cannot go so far afield that we will not know at what they are aiming.

The course of study is a matter that each school has to determine every year for itself. A general guide would avoid such extremes as we now find. For instance in theoretical work, seven hours a week for the first year, and one hour a week the third year, with hours on duty in wards the same throughout. Class work to the nurse in the third year is invaluable, she can really comprehend and appreciate lectures by that time. And in the practical course,—is it to be no department for children, only six obstetrical cases, a limited number of medical cases and the rest surgery? In such a place the surgery is so prominent that it hides all other departments from view till nothing else seems worth while, if only the nurse is well trained in this one of the fundamental departments and can be first assistant to the surgeon, even in abdominal work, or is a proficient anæsthetist.

The Nurse Training-school Council of the Education Department has had this under consideration for some time, and I am sure they will be very glad of any suggestion from the members present.

This past year the State Lunacy Commission established the office of superintendent of the training school in the state hospitals. Two points in the eligibility clause for candidates are that the applicant must be a graduate of a general hospital and have held an executive position in a training school. This is the first time they have been able to have a graduate nurse devote her whole time to the training school; formerly the position was combined with that of matron.

I have taken from my annual report a few statistics. Figures usually

are tiresome in a paper, but I will promise not to try your patience many minutes. From August 1, 1907, to July 31, 1908, which is the school year in the Education Department, two hundred and twenty-five calls and visits were made, varying in length from half an hour to two days. One hundred and nineteen full reports were filed, and one hundred and six special reports. Each school had at least one call; the greatest number of calls to any one institution, or at least in its interest, was ten. Of one hundred and five schools, seventy have a full three-year course; seven have the minimum two-year course; twenty-eight range from two years and two months to two years and eight months; fifteen do private nursing outside of the hospital in the third year, only three to the extent of three months' time; in most of them it really means little more than emergency work. Five have district visiting as a part of the course; sixty-two run their own obstetrical departments; fifty-five have children's departments; forty-one care for contagious cases; fifty-six have diet kitchens; three do not have male patients; fifty have formed affiliation for obstetrics, children or general work. Nine have one month probation; four have six months probation; twenty-two have three months probation, and seventy have two months probation.

Average number of hours per week on day duty, fifty-nine; average number of hours per week on night duty, eighty-three; average number of hours per week for the year, sixty-five; average number of class hours per week, three.

Three schools require high school diplomas; eight schools require two years in the high school. This past year there were a few schools, three or four, that had not made a strong stand for the one-year high school, or its full equivalent. All but one are demanding it to-day, and this year I do not expect to find a school where it is not enforced.

Age limit has been eighteen to thirty-five. The feeling is that both ages are extreme. Twenty to thirty seems better, and some are not admitting women under twenty-two.

In round numbers there are 3000 pupils enrolled in our schools now. Second and third year enrollment is about the same. The first is one-third larger. If the total enrollment could be called the daily average of nurses on duty, each nurse would care for $3\frac{2}{3}$ patients daily. Next year I shall endeavor to get the daily average of nurses on duty as well as patients treated, in order that we may know the true proportion.

I have also a few notes on the last examination. Of the 261 examined, 27 failed; two of these failed in only two subjects, but with a general average below 75 per cent. Thirteen failed in 3 subjects, eight failed in 4 subjects, three failed in 5 subjects, one failed in 6

subjects. The lowest general average was 64.3 per cent. with a failure in six subjects. Only three were below a general average of 70 per cent., and sixteen below a general average of 75 per cent. Twelve had honor marks, having passed seven subjects at 90 per cent. or over. Of the two hundred and sixty-one, the failures in each subject are named in the first column of figures; of those who did not pass, the figures are given in the second column, besides being included in the first:

Practical examination	15	6
Anatomy and physiology	34	18
Medical nursing	5	3
Obstetrical nursing	10	6
Nursing of children	71	22
Bacteriology	1	1
Surgery	4	2
Materia medica	49	20
Diet cooking	31	18

IN A NURSE'S FLAT

By M. E. MARQUIS

"MARY ETHEL, Mary Ethel!" shouts Antonio from the top flat.

"Yes," I answer despairingly, as I make my way back to see what she requires of me.

"Oh, did you find your rubbers?" she asks in an interesting way, her eagle eyes glancing suspiciously at my shoes.

"No," I admit triumphantly, even defiantly. "I could n't find them."

"Now Mary Ethel," she goes on reprovingly, "they are in that small, wooden box, under your suit case and bag, on the left-hand side of the old chiffonniere in your closet. I put them there, myself."

I gaze at her in mild, sheepish wonder; it's humiliating to have other people tell you where your rubbers are.

Antonio goes on: "You know what a cold you have had lately!" Yes, I do know, and I immediately march to the closet designated by Antonio and put my rubbers on.

Antonio never dreams that I enjoyed that cold. It was one of the red-letter days of my existence, when my breakfast was brought to my bedside. Such splendid toast, knee-deep in butter; and every time I grew interested in the toast, the coffee-pot would wobble around in a frightful way as if it were going to lose its contents, for Antonio, being